



STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION

September 21, 2006 Morning Briefing (partial compilation)

- Deputy Commissioner Sloan speaks to the West Tennessee Clean Cities Coalition this evening in Memphis.

Environment and Conservation News Clips for 09.21.06

Tennessee's first hybrid auto debuts in Spring Hill (Daily Herald)

SPRING HILL — "Fuel Friendly Day" did not start out in a friendly fashion for General Motors/Spring Hill Manufacturing site manager Harvey Thomas. "A 10-point buck hit me on my way in this morning," Thomas told the group gathered for the event at the Saturn/GM Manufacturing plant. "I'm not making this up — before I even knew I'd been in an accident, the airbags and every other safety device in my car kicked in. I'm very glad I only drive GM products," he said. When the laughter died down, Thomas and UAW Local 1853 Chairman Mike Herron welcomed Gov. Phil Bredeson, Maury County Mayor Jim Bailey, Spring Hill Mayor Danny Leverette and others to the official debut of GM's Saturn Hybrid Vue. The Key Note address was given by Beth Lowery, GM Group Vice President of Environment & Energy. http://columbiadailyherald.com/articles/2006/09/21/top_stories/05firsthybrid.txt

City joins pact aimed at curbing pollution (Times-Free Press)

The agreement signed by Mayor Ron Littlefield calls for Chattanooga to reduce its carbon dioxide emissions. Chattanooga has joined 275 cities across the country in pledging to reduce carbon dioxide pollution with Mayor Ron Littlefield's signing of the U.S. Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement. The pact commits city governments to bringing their carbon dioxide emissions to 7 percent below 1990 levels by 2012. City forester Gene Hyde said Chattanooga would begin an "emissions inventory" to identify major government carbon dioxide sources. Mr. Hyde said the city has taken several steps to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, including the use of electric buses and the replacement of incandescent light bulbs with LED lights in traffic signals. In addition, since 1990 the city has added at least 5,000 trees, which absorb carbon dioxide, he said. "It could very well be we've already reached that (7 percent below 1990 levels) and need no further action," Mr. Hyde said. The climate agreement was initiated by Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels in February 2005 and is endorsed by the U.S. Conference of Mayors. The Chattanooga Tree Commission in August urged Mr. Littlefield to sign the pact. "I have always been a strong supporter of the environment, especially air pollution control," Mr. Littlefield said in a statement. "This Climate Protection Agreement moves us one step further by providing cleaner air for everyone in our region and in the entire country."

<http://class.timesfreepress.com/ShowStoryTemplate.asp?Path=ChatTFPress/2006/09/21&ID=Ar00903&Section=Metro/Region> (SUBSCRIPTION)

Green U. (Metro Pulse)

You can't say UT never did anything for the environment

The University of Tennessee recently exchanged its traditional orange for a more sustainable green. After two years of planning, UT introduced students, faculty and staff to a new, campus-wide initiative designed to spread the word about UT's environmental efforts. Last week's three-day rollout, titled "Make Orange Green," included informational tables about local environmental groups and initiatives; a screening of Al Gore's film, *An*



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Inconvenient Truth; panel discussions with UT scientists on their global warming research; and a press conference announcing a new student-led campus biodiesel program. "I think it is important that people realize we have many environmental activities and programs on campus to date," says Sarah Surak, recycling coordinator for UT. "The biodiesel project is a good example of what students are doing here on campus. By providing a hub for environmental information we hope to spark interest in students, faculty and staff in learning how to 'Make Orange Green.'" The innovative biodiesel program creates a model of campus sustainability and highlights student activism. Scott Curran, a senior mechanical engineering student from Oak Ridge, and partner Sean Peterson, also a senior in mechanical engineering, created the UT Biodiesel Production Pilot Plant through a grant made possible by the UT Environmental Semester program in 2005. "Our intention with this program was to look at how, as engineers, we could approach the issue of sustainability on campus," says Curran. "Our hope is as we refine the system, it can be used as a model for other colleges and universities." Waste vegetable oil from UT dining services is converted at the plant into biodiesel fuel by a reaction between vegetable oil, methanol and lye, similar to making soap. The reaction causes the oil to separate into glycerin and methyl esters, or biodiesel. Glycerin is drained off, and the biodiesel is then washed to rid the fuel of excess methanol and lye. Water used to wash the fuel absorbs methanol and lye and separates them from the mix. The finished product, biodiesel, must be thoroughly tested before it is used in vehicles. The Pilot Plant processor currently produces two 40-gallon batches of biodiesel each week for the UT fleet. Designed for scalability, the plant has a maximum capacity of 80 gallons per batch, but is not yet up to maximum production. Eleven campus vehicles are fueled by the biodiesel processed at the plant, with several more on the way. "The ultimate goal for this program is to convert all waste vegetable oil into biodiesel for use in campus vehicles," says Curran. "Hopefully this will provide a model for other universities to follow." In addition to biodiesel and other plant-based fuels research, UT is one of five regional Sun Grant centers working to develop new ways to use plants as sources of energy. Leading the way as the largest purchaser of Green Power in Tennessee, UT won three Green School awards from the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation for efforts in everything from recycling to energy savings. Last year alone, UT recycled over 600 tons of refuse. Universities across the state have recently followed the lead of UT students, who in 2003 passed a resolution calling for a student fee to be used for environmental initiatives on campus. The \$5 per semester increase was overwhelmingly successful and implemented through the leadership of Students Promoting Environmental Action in Knoxville (SPEAK). "I think it's pretty incredible we were able to succeed," said J.P. Plumlee, a UT graduate who now works with students to implement environmental initiatives on their campus. "There were some times where I thought all our efforts were fruitless. It was really tough for a while. But to see how far it's come and to see how excited and energetic and supportive the rest of the campus has become to these issues is incredible. I think faculty and staff have caught on to how important these environmental issues are." According to Chancellor Loren Crabtree, the student fee generates \$450,000 each semester for renewable energy initiatives on campus. Honored as a Green Power Partner by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, UT buys 2,075 kilowatt hours each year, placing fourth overall in the Southeast. UT has also established an Environmental Stewardship Fund that allows alumni, faculty and staff to contribute to environmental efforts on campus. "It is gratifying to see our students take leadership in programs such as these," says Crabtree. "UT is working hard to be part of the solution to the environmental issues facing our state, nation and world." For more information about the UT Biodiesel Plant, contact UT's Society of Automotive Engineers at <http://apcsi.utk.edu/SAE/biodiesel.htm>.
http://www.metropulse.com/articles/2006/16_38/citybeat.shtml



Hot Topic (Metro Pulse)

The debate over climate change is over. A majority in the world's scientific community acknowledges global warming as both a fact and a dilemma. To what extent mankind's activities affect that change and how it will ultimately affect mankind is still open to debate. At the root of the answers to those questions is the carbon cycle, the generation of carbon dioxide, both naturally and through deliberate burning of fossil fuels and other human practices such as land-clearing and agriculture. CO₂ is the leading culprit among greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere that are behind global warming, or the gradual increase of the average temperature of the Earth's atmosphere. A group of distinguished researchers at Oak Ridge National Laboratory's (ORNL) Environmental Sciences Division (ESD) is studying that carbon cycle and sharing its data with both the U.S. government and the worldwide scientific community. The Carbon Dioxide Information Analysis Center, established in 1982 at ORNL, has been the U.S. Department of Energy's primary center for global-change data and information analysis since then. The ORNL work gets little recognition from the general public, but its importance in informing other scientists and in helping direct government policy is hard to overestimate, even though the research http://www.metropulse.com/articles/2006/16_38/cover_story_2.shtml

Forest Land Road Rule Overturned (S.F. Chronicle)

A federal judge has overturned a Bush administration rule that would've allowed states to build roads through millions of acres of federal forest land. U.S. District Judge Elizabeth D. Laporte, in a decision released Wednesday, ruled that the administration ignored both the National Environmental Policy Act and the U.S. Endangered Species Act in formulating its plan for roadless areas on federal public lands. The ruling reinstitutes a policy drafted during the Clinton administration and implemented in 2001 that forbid new roads on more than 50 million acres of pristine wildlands. That includes 4.4 million acres in California. It is unclear whether the administration will appeal the decision or try to draft a new plan that incorporates extensive environmental review. Environmentalists hailed the decision, saying it vindicated their contention that the Bush rule was a simple attempt to open up public lands to mining, logging and off-road vehicles. Critics also said the Bush rule illegally overturned the Clinton-era plan. "It's a great ruling," said Sean Cosgrove, the national forestry policy specialist for the Sierra Club. "It shows the strength of the 2001 rule, which was based on real science and extensive public input." Opponents of the Clinton plan generally maintain that the new court ruling does nothing to break a long-standing logjam over national forest policy. "We've been going over this thing for the eight years of the Clinton administration and six years with Bush, and what do we have to show for it?" asked David Bischel, the president of the California Forestry Association. "We're basically back to square one." <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2006/09/20/BAGHVL997N8.DTL>